

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method of transmitting a command in a gaming network, the method comprising:

generating a command originating at a master server or a slave server ~~based upon an event at a gaming machine;~~

digitally signing the command by performing a hashing function over at least a portion of a message that includes the command to produce a message digest and passing the message digest through a digital signature algorithm to produce a digitally signed command including a session key that is changeable and associated with a session index so that a receiving node can determine the session key used;

transmitting the digitally signed command from a transmitting node at the master server or slave server to a receiving node for verification wherein the digitally signed command from the transmitting node is subjected to the hashing function to produce a message digest, the message digest is passed through the digital signature algorithm to produce a digitally signed command at the receiving node, and the digitally signed command at the receiving node is compared to the digitally signed command from the transmitting mode to determine if there is a match; and

performing an action at the receiving node in response to the command only if the digitally signed command at the receiving node matches the digitally signed command from the transmitting node and if the digitally signed command at the receiving node does not match the digitally signed command from the transmitting node, issuing an alarm or a notice.

2. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, the method comprising monitoring events on ~~the~~ a gaming machine prior to generating the command.

3. (Previously presented) The method of claim 2, wherein monitoring is performed by a master server and the receiving node is a slave server.

4. (Previously presented) The method of claim 2, wherein monitoring events is performed by a slave server and the receiving node is a gaming machine.

5. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the event further comprises an event triggering a bonus to be paid.

6. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the command further comprises a bonus command.

7. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein transmitting the command comprises transmitting a first digitally signed bonus command to a slave server and transmitting a second digitally signed bonus command to ~~the~~ a gaming machine.

8. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the method comprises transmitting an unsigned message after the generation of the command and digitally signing the command at a slave server.

9. (Currently amended) A method of awarding a bonus in a gaming network, the method comprising:

generating a bonus command originating at a master server or slave server;

digitally signing the bonus command by performing a hashing function over at least a portion of a message that includes the bonus command to produce a message digest and then passing the message digest through a digital signature algorithm to produce a digitally signed bonus command including a session key which is changeable and associated with a session index so that a receiving node can determine the session key used;

transmitting the digitally signed bonus command from a transmitting node at the master server or slave server to an electronic gaming machine wherein the digitally signed bonus command from the transmitting node is subjected to the hashing function to produce a message digest, the message digest is passed through the digital signature algorithm to produce a digitally signed bonus command at the gaming machine, and the digitally signed bonus command at the gaming machine is compared to the digitally signed bonus command from the transmitting node to determine if they match; and

paying a bonus at the gaming machine in response to the bonus command only if the digitally signed bonus command at the gaming machine matches the digitally signed bonus command from the transmitting node and if the digitally signed bonus command at the gaming machine does not match the digitally signed bonus command from the transmitting node, issuing an alarm or a notice that there was no match.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9, the method comprising monitoring play at a group of electronic gaming machines.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10, the method comprising determining that one of the group of electronic gaming machines is to receive a bonus.

12. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein generating a bonus command is performed by a master server.

13. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein generating a bonus command is performed by a slave server.

14. (Previously presented) The method of claim 9, wherein transmitting the bonus command comprises transmitting a first digitally signed bonus command to a slave server and transmitting a second digitally signed bonus command to the electronic gaming machine.

15. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the method comprises transmitting an unsigned message after the generation of the bonus command and digitally signing the bonus command at a slave server.

16. (Currently amended) A method of verifying a command in a gaming network, the method comprising:

receiving a command message with a digital signature at a subservient device in a gaming network, the command message including a session key that is changeable and associated with a session index so that the subservient device can determine the session key used;

verifying the digital signature at the subservient device by subjecting the command message to a hashing function to produce a message digest, passing the message digest through a digital signature algorithm to produce a digital signature at the subservient device, and comparing the digital signature at the subservient device to the digital signature included with the command message to determine if there is a match; and

executing the command message at the subservient device only if the digital signature at the subservient device matches the digital ~~signal~~ signature included with the command message and if the digital signature at the subservient device does not match the digital signature included with the command message, issuing a notice that there was no match.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16, receiving a command message with a digital signature at a subservient device comprising receiving a command message with a digital signature at a slave server.

18. (Original) The method of claim 16, receiving a command message with a digital signature at a subservient device comprising receiving a command message with a digital signature at an electronic gaming machine.

19. (Original) The method of claim 16, executing the command at the subservient device comprising generating a second command message, providing a digital signature to the second command message and transmitting the second command message with the digital signature.

20. (Original) The method of claim 16, executing the command comprising paying a bonus to a player at an electronic gaming machine.

21. (Currently amended) A method of verifying a bonus in a gaming network, the method comprising:

receiving a bonus message with a digital signature at a subservient device in a gaming network, the bonus message including a session key that is changeable and associated with a session index so that the subservient device can determine the session key used;

verifying the digital signature at the subservient device by subjecting the bonus message to a hashing function to produce a message digest, passing the message digest through a digital signature algorithm to produce a digital signature at the subservient device, and comparing the digital signature at the subservient device to the digital signal included with the bonus message to determine if there is a match; and

paying a bonus specified in the bonus message at the subservient device, if the digital signature at the subservient device matches the digital signal included with the bonus message and if the digital signature at the subservient device does not match the digital signature included with the bonus message, issuing an alarm and denying payment of the bonus specified in the bonus message.

22. (Original) The method of claim 21, the method comprising notifying a system administrator if the message does not verify.

23. (Currently amended) The method of claim 21, verifying the digital signature at the subservient device comprising generating a ~~second~~ command message, providing a digital signature to the ~~second~~ command message and transmitting the ~~second~~ command message with the digital signature.